

**Sunday 24 October 2021**

# **Bible Sunday**

**and the last Sunday after Trinity**

Prefatory letter at the beginning of the Worms Bible, with a miniature of St Jerome writing at a desk and a decorated initial 'F', Harley MS 2803, f. 1v



Sermon © Revd Jane Hyde.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers of intercession © Jen Ryder.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,  
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 One Church, one faith, one Lord** (click on this link to hear the hymn)

### The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

### The Preparation

**All Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Therefore, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All** Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
**Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen.

## **The Gloria**

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

**All** Glory be to God in Heaven,  
Songs of joy and peace we bring,  
Thankful hearts and voices raising,  
To creation's Lord we sing.  
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,  
Glory be to God our King:  
Glory be to God our King.  
  
Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,  
Bore the load of this world's sin;  
Only Son of God the Father,  
You have brought us peace within.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

**Now your glorious reign begin:  
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,  
You we praise with one accord.  
None in heav'n or earth is like you,  
Only you are Christ the Lord.  
With the Father and the Spirit,  
Ever worshipped and adored:  
Ever worshipped and adored.**

### **The Collect for Bible Sunday**

Blessed Lord,  
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:  
help us so to hear them,  
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them  
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,  
we may embrace and for ever hold fast  
the hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Ho, everyone who thirsts,

come to the waters;

and you that have no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,

and your labour for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,

and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear, and come to me;

listen, so that you may live.  
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.  
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.  
See, you shall call nations that you do not know,  
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake their way,  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. *Isaiah 55:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## **Second reading**

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. *2 Timothy 3:14—4:5*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Your word is a lamp unto my feet** ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

## **Gospel reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said, ‘The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.

‘You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?’ *John 5:36b–end*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Most of us have a deep longing for certainty ... and this is not necessarily wrong. So much in our lives and in our world is in flux, the 'goalposts' are constantly shifting, and there seems so little that we can really rely on. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we often want assurance that some things will never change. Nor is it surprising that, for many people, this place of assurance and certainty is their religious faith. God does not change after all, so surely this eternal changelessness should be reflected in the church? Even people who never set foot inside a church can get surprisingly angry and upset when there is news that their local parish church might close. Many congregations who are up to speed with current plans in our own Diocese for groups of churches to form 'Mission Communities' ... with fewer paid clergy ... will know that some folk are finding all this a very worrying prospect. Some things just should not change!

The trouble is that sometimes, if things are to continue to serve their original purpose, they have to change their form. Parish churches are built to house a worshipping community, but if the community has moved on ... or changed ... then so must the Church. It is not the buildings themselves that matter, but the people gathered inside them. All God's people, wherever they find themselves, are called to maintain Christian worship, to be beacons of God's love in serving, as best they can, the needs of all who live and work in their community. In the current social and economic climate this is a huge challenge perhaps best served in new and prayer-led ways.

These 'new ways' are what Jesus is painstakingly trying to explain to his accusers in today's Gospel, and they are part of a struggle for understanding that goes on throughout his ministry. In the earlier part of Chapter 5 of John's Gospel, Jesus has performed a miracle on the sabbath. He has healed a lame man, and caused great controversy by doing so. According to the strict letter of the Jewish Scriptures ... as they were then interpreted ... Jesus should not have been doing this kind of thing on the official, God sanctioned, day of rest, and, in doing so, he was challenging the unchanging certainties by which his accusers lived.

Jesus is trying to argue that, on the contrary, it is they who have changed what they inherited by refusing to allow it to adapt. The law of Moses, handed down through generations, was designed to build a distinctive people, whose whole lifestyle and society would demonstrate the nature of God. The Law, and the scriptures that bear witness to it, are not ends in themselves, Jesus is arguing, but means to an end.

He says with fierce clarity, that they are clearly not serving the ends for which they were designed, because God's people do not know what God is like. If they did, they would have recognised Jesus. They would have recognised that what he

did, what he taught, all that he was, was perfectly aligned with all that God's chosen people have always known about the nature of God, through their laws and their scriptures. Instead they have allowed the laws to mask God, when they were designed to reveal him. They have become so attached to the letter of the Law that they have forgotten that the Law serves God. The Law must not be allowed to dictate the nature of God and what God will, or will not, do for his people. Jesus' accusers say that he has changed the Law but really it is they who have changed it by applying it so strictly, so inhumanly, that it cannot any longer reveal the God who shaped it.

It is a terrifying thought that we might be betraying God by what we see to be our faithfulness. We are not bound by the ancient Jewish law in the same way as those adversaries of Jesus, but we can harden our hearts and attitudes and become bound by local tradition ... custom ... 'the way we've always done it round here'! If we cling unyieldingly to these 'certainties', rather than to God, we are almost bound to fall into error. The Bible, like the Law, bears witness to God. It is designed to show us the shape of lives lived in obedience to God. Scripture will not act in a way that is not characteristic of God, because it is God's word ... God's tool. If we refuse to look at scripture with hearts open to a clearer understanding based on something of where we are now, today, with all that is happening around us, we make it into a weapon of hatred or division, or false reassurance, and we will be in danger of losing the ability to discern God.

Throughout the Bible we see the nature of God displayed, culminating in Jesus. It is the Bible's job to help shape us into God's likeness, and we must not make it serve any other ends. The most damning thing that Jesus says to his questioners in today's Gospel is that it is Moses himself, the one they thought they were serving, who would condemn them for not recognising Jesus.

How truly awful would it be to find that we are reading and using the Scriptures ... which we think we love ... in a lazy, unreflective and shallow way to hide the face of Jesus for our generation. Amen

## **The Creed**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

### **Prayers of intercession**

God of the silence, God in the stillness and the calm,  
who met Elijah not in the rushing wind but in quietness,  
who brought peace to a group of fishermen in a raging storm:  
be with us, here, and now.

Help us to leave behind the busyness of our lives, and listen for your word.

God of relationships, God of compassion and love,  
who gave Ruth to Naomi when she had no family,  
who gave Abraham and Sarah a baby when they had given up hope,  
who brought together the disciples and other followers of Jesus:  
we think of our relationships,  
our families, our friends and colleagues and our Church family,  
we lift them to you now,  
we bring our thanks, our concerns, our need for forgiveness.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of wisdom, God of the proverbs and the 10 commandments,  
who inspired your prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, to speak your words:  
we bring before you our country and its political leaders, we pray for wisdom  
and justice.

and we think of situations, people, places around the world that need change.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of creativity, God of beauty and delight,  
who gave David the gift of song-writing, who spoke to Joseph in vivid dreams,  
who inspired the Songs of Solomon:  
open our eyes to see you all around us.

help us to find you in nature, in poetry, in song, in conversation, in touch.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of surprises, God of hopes and plans,

who called Samuel in the night,

who met Paul in blinding light,

Help us to hear your call for our lives, however big or small,

open our eyes to your promptings and guidance, so that we can see the people,  
places, opportunities that you want us to.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of revelation, who came to us as one of us.

You call us to be the light of the world,

to love our enemies, and treat our neighbours as we would be treated,

who urges us not to worry, who encouraged us to seek and we will find,

who told us that we are so loved that if we were one of hundred sheep he would  
leave the other ninety-nine to look for us if we were lost:

help us to take your Gospel words seriously,

let them shape our lives and give us courage to take new paths and explore new

patterns. Help us to hear their call afresh and let them release us from old

routines to try new steps and dance with you in abandoned joy through all our days.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

## **The peace**

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3** [Jesus loves me, this I know](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)  
or [Veni Creator Spiritus](#) (Gregorian chant)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
and the blessing of God the Almighty:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4** [We have a Gospel to proclaim](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
And so we gladly thank you,  
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

God of all grace,  
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry  
with the bread of his life  
and the word of his kingdom:  
renew your people with your heavenly grace,  
and in all our weakness  
sustain us by your true and living bread;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work

**to your praise and glory.  
Amen.**